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MORANG'S LITERATURE SERIES



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Selections from Tennyson

EDITED WITH NOTES BY

JOHN C. SAUL, M.A.

TORONTO

MORANG & CO, LIMITED

1905

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SELECTIONS FROM
TENNYSON

1830-1860

CHOSEN AND EDITED

BY

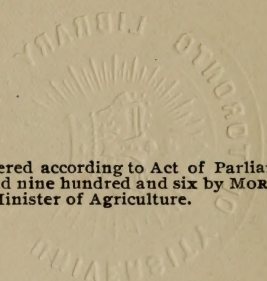
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MORANG & CO., LIMITED

1906



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PREFATORY NOTE

Owing to difficulties of copyright this edition includes no poems of the late Lord Tennyson, published subsequent to 1860.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.....	I
THE MAY QUEEN.....	7
LADY CLARE.....	17
THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.....	21
THE LADY OF SHALOTT.....	24
DORA.....	30
THE BROOK.....	36
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.....	44
THE BEGGAR MAID.....	50
ST. AGNES' EVE.....	51
SIR GALAHAD.....	52
ULYSSES.....	56
THE LOTOS-EATERS.....	58
CENONE.....	65
THE EPIC.....	75
MORTE D' ARTHUR.....	77
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON..	87
YOU ASK ME WHY.....	97
OF OLD SAT FREEDOM.....	98
LOVE THOU THY LAND.....	99
THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.....	103
A DREAM OF THE FUTURE.....	105
THE POET'S SONG.....	106
THE POET.....	107
THE DYING SWAN.....	109
THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.....	111
THE BLACKBIRD.....	112
THE EAGLE.....	113
THE OWL.....	114
BREAK, BREAK, BREAK !.....	114
A FAREWELL.....	115
CIRCUMSTANCE.....	116
AMPHION.....	116
ODE TO MEMORY.....	120
SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS".....	124
AS THRO' THE LAND AT EVE WE WENT.....	125
SWEET AND LOW.....	125
THE BUGLE SONG.....	126
TEARS, IDLE TEARS.....	126
THY VOICE IS HEARD.....	127
HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR.....	128
ASK ME NO MORE.....	128
POEMS FROM "IN MEMORIAM".....	129
TO —.....	135
FROM "THE PALACE OF ART".....	136

Biographical Outline

1809. August 6th. Born at Somersby, in Lincolnshire.
1817. Entered Louth Grammar School.
1821. Left Louth School. Educated at home.
1827. *Poems by Two Brothers* (in reality three, Charles, Alfred and Frederick).
1828. Entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Joined "The Apostles." Became acquainted with Arthur Henry Hallam.
1829. Won Chancellor's medal for *Timbuctoo*.
1830. *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Visited the Pyrenees with Arthur Henry Hallam.
1831. Death of his father. Left Cambridge.
1832. Tour on the Rhine with Hallam. *Poems* (dated 1833)
1833. Tour in Scotland. Arthur Henry Hallam died.
1836. Became engaged to Emily Sellwood.
1837. Removed from Somersby with family.
1842. *Poems* in two volumes. Invests all his money in a wood carving scheme.
1844. Loses all his money by failure of wood carving venture.
1845. Granted pension of £200 a year by Government.
1847. *The Princess : A Medley*.
1848. Tour in Cornwall.
1850. *In Memoriam*. Married Emily Sellwood. Appointed Poet Laureate.
1851. Settled at Twickenham. Visited Italy with his wife.
1852. Hallam Tennyson born. *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*.

TENNYSON

- 1853. Settled at Farringford, in the Isle of Wight.
- 1854. Lionel Tennyson born.
- 1855. Received degree of D.C.L. from Oxford. *Maud and Other Poems.*
- 1858. Visited Norway.
- 1859. *The Idylls of the King.*
- 1861. Another visit to the Pyrenees.
- 1864. Garibaldi visited Tennyson. *Enoch Arden.*
- 1865. His mother died. Elected a member of the Royal Society.
- 1869. Assisted in founding the Metaphysical Society. *The Holy Grail and Other Poems.* Occupied new residence at Aldworth, Sussex.
- 1872. *Gareth and Lynette.*
- 1875. *Queen Mary.*
- 1876. *Harold.*
- 1880. *Ballads and Other Poems.*
- 1883. Voyage with Gladstone on the "Pembroke Castle."
- 1884. *The Cup, The Falcon, and Becket.* Created Baron Tennyson.
- 1885. *Tiresias and Other Poems.*
- 1886. Lionel Tennyson died. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.*
- 1889. *Demeter and Other Poems.*
- 1892. *The Foresters.* Died at Aldworth, October 6th. Buried in Westminster Abbey. *The Death of Oenone, Akbar's Dream and Other Poems.*

SELECTIONS FROM TENNYSON

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Published originally in the 1830 volume, and subsequently expanded into *The Day Dream* and published in 1842. It is one of the best instances in English Literature "of the giving of new life, through a new form of beauty, to an old tale."

THE SLEEPING PALACE

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd, 5
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn. 10
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower, 15
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :

In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs

Droop sleepily : no sound is made,

20

Not even of a gnat that sings.

More like a picture seemeth all

Than those old portraits of old kings,

That watch the sleepers from the wall.

Here sits the Butler with a flask

25

Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there

The wrinkled steward at his task,

The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;

The page has caught her hand in his :

Her lips are sever'd as to speak :

30

His own are pouted to a kiss :

The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

Till all the hundred summers¹ pass,

The beams, that through the Oriel shine,

Make prisms in every carven glass,

35

And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.

Each baron at the banquet sleeps,

Grave faces gather'd in a ring.

His state the king reposing keeps.

He must have been a jovial king.

40

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows

At distance like a little wood ;

Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,

And grapes with bunches red as blood ;

1. **Hundred summers**—In the original story the princess was condemned to sleep for one hundred years.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace
of mind ; 50
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall
never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry
day ;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me
Queen of May ;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel
copse, 55
Till Charles's Wain¹ came out above the tall white
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the
pane :
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on
high :
I long to see a flower so before the day I die. 60

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer
o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering
grave.

1. **Charles's Wain**—Literally "the churl's or peasant's wagon," the constellation of Ursa Major or the Great Bear, which in the outline bears some resemblance to a country wagon.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of
mine, 65

In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the
hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the
world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the
waning light

You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at
night ; 70

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow
cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bul-
rush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the haw-
thorn shade,

And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am
lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when
you pass, 75

With your feet above my head in the long and
pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive
me now ;

You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere
I go ;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be
wild,

You should not fret for me, mother, you have an-
other child. 80

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-
place ;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon
your face ;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what
you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm
far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said good-
night for evermore, 85
And you see me carried out from the threshold of
the door ;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be grow-
ing green :
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:
Let her take 'em: they are hers : I shall never garden
more : 90
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush
that I set
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother : call me before the day is
born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year, 95
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother
dear.

CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the
lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's
here.

100

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the
skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that can-
not rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers
that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed
sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be
done !
But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words
of peace.

105

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me
there !
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver
head !
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my
bed.

110

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the
sin.

Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will
let me in :

Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could
be, 115

For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for
me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-
watch beat,

There came a sweeter token when the night and
morning meet :

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in
mine,

And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign. 120

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels
call ;

It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was
over all ;

The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my
soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear ;
I saw you sitting in the house and I no longer
here ; 126

With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt
resign'd,

And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not
 what was said ; 130
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my
 mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, ‘It’s not for them :
 its mine.’
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a
 sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-
 bars, 135
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among
 the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to
 go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am passed
 away. 140

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to
 fret ;
There’s many a worthier than I, would make him
 happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his
 wife ;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire
 of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a
glow ; 145

He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I
know.

And there I move no longer now, and there his light
may shine—

Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is
done

The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the
sun— 150

For ever and for ever with those just souls and
true—

And what is life, that we should moan ? why make
we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—

And there to wait a little while till you and Effie
come—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your
breast— 155

And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary
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Published in 1842. The poem is based partly on Miss Ferrier's
Inheritance, the heroine of which is a Miss St. Clair.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn : 5
Lovers long-betroth'd were they :
They too will wed the morrow morn :
God's blessing on the day !

'He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair; 10
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, 'Who was this that went from thee ?'
'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare, 15
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd !' said Alice the nurse,
'That all comes round so just and fair :
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.' 20

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse ?'
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild ?'
'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,
'I speak the truth : you are my child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast; 25
I speak the truth, as I live by bread !
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true, 30
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.'

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace
of mind ; 50
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall
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The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

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I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true, 30
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
 'But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's, 35
 When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
 'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
 And fling-the diamond necklace by.' 40

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
 'But keep the secret all ye can.'
She said, 'Not so : but I will know
 If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse, 45
 'The man will cleave unto his right.'
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,
 'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !
 Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.' 50
'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,
 'So strange it seems to me.'

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
 My mother dear, if this be so,
And lav your hand upon my head, 55
 And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,
 She was no longer Lady Clare :
She went by dale and she went by down,
 With a single rose in her hair. 60

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower : 65
 'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !
Why come you drest like a village maid,
 That are the flower of the earth ?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
 I am but as my fortunes are : 70
I am a beggar born,' she said,
 And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
 'For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald, 75
 'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up !
Her heart within her did not fail :
She looked into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale. 80

He laughed a laugh of merry scorn :
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood :
'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—

'If you are not the heiress born, 85
And I,' said he 'the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In 1790, Henry Cecil, heir to his uncle the Earl of Exeter, married Sarah Hoggins, the daughter of a farmer at Bolas in Shropshire. Cecil, in the disguise of an artist, had been for some time residing at the farm house, and continued for three years longer to reside with his wife in the village. At the end of this time Cecil, by the death of his uncle, succeeded to the Earldom of Exeter. The Earl was thereupon compelled to inform his wife of his rank, and did so in the manner described in the poem. Three years later the Countess of Exeter died at the early age of 24 years. The poem was first published in 1842.

In her ear he whispers gaily,
 ‘If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch’d thee daily,
 And I think thou lov’st me well.’
She replies, in accents fainter, 5
 ‘There is none I love like thee.’
He is but a landscape-painter,
 And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
 Presses his without reproof : 10
Leads her to the village altar,
 And they leave her father’s roof.
‘I can make no marriage present :
 Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant, 15
 And I love thee more than life.’
They by parks and lodges going
 See the lordly castles stand :
Summer woods, about them blowing,
 Made a murmur in the land. 20
From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,

'Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
So she goes by him attended, 25
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great, 30
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer :
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer, 35
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly !
He shall have a cheerful home ;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come. 40
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns ;
Sees a mansion more majestic 45
Than all those she saw before :
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call, 50
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly, 55

' All of this is mine and thine.'
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he. 60
All at once the colour flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin :
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over 65
Pale again as death did prove :
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirit sank : 70
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank :
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady, 75
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honour
Unto which she was not born. 80
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
And she murmur'd, ' Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me !'
So she droop'd and droop'd before him, 85
Fading slowly from his side :
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.

Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down, 90
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 'Bring the dress and put it on her, 95
 That she wore when she was wed.'
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest. 100

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

The version of the poem is that of 1842, very much altered from that in the 1833 volume. "The key to this tale of magic symbolism," says Hallam, Lord Tennyson, "is of deep human significance and is to be found" in lines 69-72. Tennyson himself explained the poem as follows: "The new-born love for something, for someone in the wide world from which she has been so long secluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities." *The Lady of Shalott*, founded on an Italian version of the legend, is interesting as evidencing the hold which the Arthurian stories had even thus early taken on the mind of the poet. The story was afterwards used in the *Lancelot and Elaine*.

PART I

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye,
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot;¹ 5

1. **Camelot**—The capital of King Arthur's dominions.

And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.

Four gray walls, and four gray towers, 15
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 20
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand? 25
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley, 30
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, 'Tis the fairy 35
Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay 40

To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott. 45

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot : 50

There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad, 55
An abbot on an ambling pad,¹
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot:

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

1. **Ambling pad**—Easy-riding horse.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights, 65
 For often thro the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot:
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed; 70
 'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves, 75
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.¹
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.²
 The bridle bells rang merrily 85
 As he rode down to Camelot:
 And from his blazon'd baldric slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armour rung,
 Beside remote Shalott. 90

1. **Sir Lancelot**—The most famous of all the Knights of the Order of the Table Round.

2. **Galaxy**—The milky way.

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burned like one burning flame together,

As he rode down to Camelot.

95

As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ; 100
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
 From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,

As he rode down to Camelot.

From the bank and from the river 105
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
 She made three paces thro' the room, 110
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,

She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide ;
 The mirror crack'd from side to side ; 115
 'The curse¹ is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
 The pale yellow woods were waning,
 1. The curse—Unrequited love.

The broad stream in his banks complaining,¹²⁰
Heavily the low sky raining,

Over tower'd Camelot ;

Down she came and found a boat

Beneath a willow left afloat,

And round about the prow she wrote ¹²⁵

The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse

Like some bold seër in a trance,

Seeing all his own mischance—

With a glassy countenance ¹³⁰

Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day

She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;

The broad stream bore her far away,

The Lady of Shalott. ¹³⁵

Lying, robed in snowy white,

That loosely flew to left and right—

The leaves upon her falling light—

Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot : ¹⁴⁰

And as the boat-head wound along

The willowy hills and fields among,

They heard her singing her last song,

The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy, ¹⁴⁵

Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,

Till her blood was frozen slowly,

And her eyes were darken'd wholly,

Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.

For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150
 The first house by the water-side,
 Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
 By garden-wall and gallery, 155
 A gleaming shape she floated by,
 Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
 Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 160
 And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this ? and what is here ?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer ; 165
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot :
 But Lancelot mused a little space ;
 He said, ' She has a lovely face ;
 God in his mercy lend her grace, 170
 The Lady of Shalott.'

DORA

Published in 1842. The poem was partly suggested by the character of Dora Creswell in Miss Mitford's *Our Village*. The most noteworthy feature of the poem, apart from the character portrayal, is its utter simplicity and the absence of all ornamentation.

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
 William and Dora. William was his son,

And she his niece. He often looked at them,
And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all, 5
And yearn'd toward William ; but the youth, be-
cause

He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, ' My son :
I married late, but I would wish to see 10
My grandchild on my knees before I die :
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter : he and I 15
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years. But William answer'd short: 20
' I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :
' You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !
But in my time a father's word was law, 25
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;
Consider, William : take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish ;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again.' 30
But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he looked at her
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;

But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house, 35
And hired himself to work within the fields ;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ; 40
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
' It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change !' 45

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William ; then distresses came on him ;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save, 50
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it ; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought 55
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :

' I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone, 60
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you :
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye 65
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad

Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound 70
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not ; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him, 75
But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers 80
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said : 'Where were you yesterday? 85
Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ?'
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child !'
'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not
Forbid you, Dora ?' Dora said again: 90
'Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !'
And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you ! 95
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;
But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell 100
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down 105
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise 110
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :
He says that he will never see me more.'
Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be, 115
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go
And I will have my boy, and bring him home : 120
And I will beg of him to take thee back :
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd 125
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks, 130
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd out

And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her : 135
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:

‘ O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child ; but now I come
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well. 140
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife ; but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus : 145
“God bless him !” he said, “and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro' !” Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am !
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight 150
His father's memory ; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.’

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs : 155
‘ I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd
my son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.’

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times. 160
And all the man was broken with remorse ;
And all his love came back a hundred-fold ;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child
Thinking of William.

So those four abode

Within one house together ; and as years 165
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

THE BROOK

Published in 1855. "In this poem the poet's complete mastery over his art is not contested by a single blemish."

Here, by this brook, we parted ; I to the East
And he for Italy—too late—too late :
One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than cent for cent ; 5
Nor could he understand how money breeds,¹
Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make
The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived ! In our schoolbooks we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd, 10
They flourished then or then ; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect²: yet the brook he loved, 15
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,

1. **Money breeds**—"That it is against nature for money to beget money." *Bacon*.

2. **Nothing perfect**—Note the remarkable familiarity with nature exhibited throughout the poem.

Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry¹ air
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
 To me that loved him ; for 'O brook,' he says, 23
 'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,
 'Whence come you ?' and the brook, why not ? re-
 plies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally,
 And sparkle out among the fern, 25
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
 Or slip between the ridges,
 By twenty thorps, a little town,
 And half a hundred bridges. 30

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out, 35
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
 It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
 In little sharps and trebles, 40
 I bubble into eddying bays,
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland² set 45
 With willow-weed and mallow.

1. **Neilgherry**—The Neilgherry hills are a favourite summer resort in India.

2. **Fairy foreland**—Miniature cape.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

50

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird ;
 Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught
 His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
 High-elbow'd grigs¹ that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,

55

And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel
 With many a silvery waterbreak
 Above the golden gravel,

60

And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

65

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child !
 A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
 Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

70

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
 Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
 James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
 For here I came, twenty years back—the week

75

1. Grigs—Grasshoppers.

Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam 80
 Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
 Stuck ; and he clamour'd from a casement, "Run" 85
 To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
 "Run, Katie !" Katie never ran : she moved
 To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
 A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon. 90

'What was it ? less of sentiment than sense
 Had Katie ; not illiterate ; nor of those
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
 And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.¹ 95

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd.
 Why ?
 What cause of quarrel ? None, she said, no cause ;
 James had no cause : but when I prest the cause,
 I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James ? I said. 100
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
 And sketching with her slender pointed foot

1. "The reference is to people who are fond of sentiment and shed tears of unreal sorrow over tales of suffering which they do not attempt to remedy and who satisfy themselves with benevolent projects that end in specious talk. With such people, sentiment does not, as it ought, lead to action ; they keep the two separate, indulging only in the former." *Rowe and Webb*.

Some figure like a wizard pentagram¹
 On garden gravel, let my query pass
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd 105
 If James were coming. "Coming every day,"
 She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,
 But evermore her father came across
 With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
 And James departed vext with him and her." 110
 How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"
 (Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
 Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
 "O would I take her father for one hour,
 For one half-hour and let him talk to me!" 115
 And even while she spoke, I saw where James
 Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
 Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
 For in I went, and call'd old Philip out 120
 To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
 He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
 Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
 He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
 He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs; 125
 He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
 His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
 Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
 Then from the plaintive mother's teat, he took
 Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each, 130
 And naming those, his friends, for whom they were:
 Then crost the common into Darnley chase

1. **Wizard pentagram**—A five-pointed figure, used in incantations.

To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech, 135
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :
"That was the four-year-old I sold the squire."
And there he told a long long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd, 140
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He gave them line : and five days after that 145
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,¹
Who then and there had offer'd something more,
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;
He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;
He gave them line : and how by chance at last ; 150
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale, 155
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho, 160
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still ; and so

1. **Golden Fleece**—The public house.

We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun, 165
 And following our own shadows thrice as long
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots, 170
 I slide by hazel covers ;
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
 Among my skimming swallows ; 175
 I make the netted sunbeam dance
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses ;
 I linger by my shingly bars ; 180
 I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever. 185

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone
 All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
 Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
 But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
 Of Brunelleschi ;¹ sleeps in peace : and he, 190
 Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
 Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :
 I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks
 By the long wash of Australasian seas

1. **Dome of Brunelleschi**—The magnificent dome over the Duomo or Cathedral in Florence was constructed by the famous architect Brunelleschi.

Far off, and holds her head to other stars, 195
And breathes in converse seasons¹. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head² in middle age forlorn, 200
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared 205
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :
Then, wondering, ask'd her, 'Are you from the farm?'
'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little : pardon
me ; 210
What do they call you ?' 'Katie.' 'That were
strange.
What surname ?' 'Willows.' 'No !' 'That is my
name.'
'Indeed !' and here he look'd so self-perplext,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes, 215
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
Then looking at her : 'Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago.' 220

1. **Converse seasons**—In 1890 this reading was changed to "April-Autumns".

2. **Tonsured head**—Bald on the crown.

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted before.

Am I so like her? so they said on board.

Sir, if you knew her in her English days,

My mother, as it seems you did, the days

225

That most she loves to talk of, come with me.

My brother James¹ is in the harvest-field:

But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

Published in the volume of 1830. This poem, remarkable for its magnificent word-painting, was written before the poet attained the age of twenty-one years. The references throughout are to the story of *Noureddin and the Fair Persian* to be found in the *Arabian Nights, Entertainment*.

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free

In the silken sail of infancy,

The tide of time flow'd back with me,

The forward-flowing tide of time;

And many a sheeny summer-morn,

5

Adown the Tigris I was borne,

By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,

High-walled gardens green and old;

True Mussulman was I and sworn,

1. **My brother James**—"These words imply that her father is dead, otherwise she would have mentioned him. Lawrence is thus at liberty to woo and win the mother in her younger likeness." *Hallam, Lord Tennyson*.

For it was in the golden prime 10
Of good Haroun Alraschid.¹

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue : 15
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side :
In sooth it was a goodly time, 20
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal 25
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept.
Adown to where the water slept 30
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on 35

1. **Haroun Alraschid**—Aaron, the Orthodox, was the most famous of all the Caliphs of Bagdat. He bore sway over an immense territory and became famous by his love of letters and his love of luxury. He rebuilt the city of Bagdat.

My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
 Until another night in night
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb 40
 Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome
 Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal 45
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.
 From the green rivage many a fall
 Of diamond rillets musical,
 Thro' little crystal arches low
 Down from the central fountain's flow 50
 Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid. 55

Above thro' many a bowery turn
 A walk with vary-colour'd shells
 Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
 All round about the fragrant marge
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn 60
 In order, eastern flowers large,
 Some dropping low their crimson bells
 Half-closed, and others studded wide
 With disks and tiars ¹ fed the time

1. **Disks and tiars**—Flowers shaped like circles and crowns.

With odour in the golden prime 65
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul¹ as he sung ; 70
Not he : but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
Apart from place, withholding time, 75
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind : 80
A sudden splendour² from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots 85
'Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere³ overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90
Grew darker from that under-flame :

1. **Bulbul**—The nightingale.

2. **Sudden splendour**—The light from the windows of the palace.

3. **Deep sphere**—"The vault of heaven."

So, leaping lightly from the boat,
 With silver anchor left afloat,
 In marvel whence that glory came
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank 95
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,
 Entranced with that place and time,
 So worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn— 100
 A realm of pleasance,¹ many a mound,
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
 Full of the city's stilly sound,
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
 The stately cedar, tamarisks, 105
 Thick rosaries of scented thorn,²
 Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
 Graven with emblems of the time,
 In honour of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid. 110

With dazed vision unawares
 From the long alley's latticed shade
 Emerged, I came upon the great
 Pavilion of the Caliphat.
 Right to the carven cedarn doors, 115
 Flung inward over spangled floors,
 Broad-baséd flights of marble stairs
 Ran up with golden balustrade,
 After the fashion of the time,

1. **Realm of pleasance**—In the story this realm was called the Garden of Gladness, and contained the great Pavilion of the Caliphat or Pavilion of Pictures.

2. **Scented thorn**—Beds of roses.

And humour¹ of the golden prime 120
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence² of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame. 125
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes³ aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time; 130
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes 135
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone; 140
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropt a rich 145

1. **Humour**—Fancy.

2. **Quintessence**—The fifth or purest essence.

3. **Mooned domes**—The domes of the Mosques, surmounted by the crescent.

Throne of the massive ore, from which
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,
 Engarlanded and diaper'd
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
 With merriment of kingly pride,
 Sole star of all that place and time,
 I saw him—in his golden prime,
 THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

150

THE BEGGAR MAID

Published in 1842. The poem is founded on the old ballad of *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*.

Her arms across her breast she laid ;
 She was more fair than words can say :
 Bare-footed came the beggar maid
 Before the king Cophetua.
 In robe and crown the king stept down,
 To meet and greet her on her way ;
 'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
 'She is more beautiful than day.'

5

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
 She in her poor attire was seen :
 One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
 One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
 So sweet a face, such angel grace,
 In all that land had never been :
 Cophetua sware a royal oath :
 'This beggar maid shall be my queen !'

10

15

ST. AGNES' EVE

First published in *The Keepsake* for 1837, under the title *Saint Agnes*. Saint Agnes was a young girl, who, at the age of thirteen suffered martyrdom under Diocletian. "In the poem every image is in such delicate harmony with the pure young worshipper that it seems to have been transfigured by her purity, and in the last four lines the very sentences faint with the breathless culmination of her rapture." St. Agnes as a type of religious enthusiasm should be compared with Sir Galahad.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon :
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers 5
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies, 10
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark, 15
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be. 20
Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ; 25
 The flashes come and go ;
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,
 And strows her lights below,
 And deepens on and up ! the gates
 Roll back, and far within 30
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
 To make me pure of sin.
 The sabbaths of Eternity,
 One sabbath deep and wide—
 A light upon the shining sea— 35
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

SIR GALAHAD

Published in 1842. This poem is a further instance of the early interest taken by Tennyson in the legends of King Arthur. Sir Galahad was afterwards taken up by the poet and becomes the central figure in the *Holy Grail*, one of the *Idylls of the King*. The Knight of the poem is a type of the Christian chivalry of the Middle Ages. He is not a mere enthusiast, but his religion becomes an incentive to action. Here he rides abroad "redressing human wrongs," but all the time he is perhaps too conscious of his own goodness. *St. Simeon Stylites* should be read along with *Sir Galahad*.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,
 My strength is as the strength of ten,
 Because my heart is pure.¹
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high, 5
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
 The horse and rider reel:

1. **My heart is pure**—*Matthew* v-8.

They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands, 10
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall!
For them I battle till the end, 15
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine. 20
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent¹ goes, 25
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there; 30
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell² rings, the censer swings, 35
And solemn chaunts resound between.

1. **Stormy crescent**—The moon setting in the midst of the storm-clouds.

2. **Shrill bell**—"During the celebration of the Mass, when the priest lifts the consecrated wafer, a bell is rung."

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres

I find a magic bark;

I leap on board: no helmsman steers:

I float till all is dark.

40

A gentle sound, an awful light!

Three angels bear the holy Grail:¹

With folded feet, in stoles of white,

On sleeping wings they sail.

Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!

45

My spirit beats her mortal bars,²

As down dark tides the glory slides,

And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne

Thro' dreaming towns I go,

50

The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,

The streets are dumb with snow.

The tempest crackles on the leads,

And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,

55

And gilds the driving hail.

I leave the plain, I climb the height;

No branchy thicket shelter yields;

But blessed forms in whistling storms

Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

60

1. **Holy Grail**—The vessel from which Christ partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. It was given to Joseph of Arimathea, who with it caught some of the blood which flowed from the side of Christ while hanging on the cross. Joseph, after being miraculously fed by the Grail during a long imprisonment, carried the vessel to England, where he placed it in the monastery of Glastonbury. Here it remained until the evil became so great in the world that it was taken up to Heaven, there to remain until purity once more should prevail. Only one who was pure in action and thought could achieve the Grail.

2. **Mortal bars**—The body.

A maiden knight¹—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease, 65
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear, 70
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony 75
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on, the prize is near.' 80
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail.

1. **Maiden Knight**—Pure in thought and deed.

ULYSSES

The poem is founded on a passage in Dante's *Inferno*, and was first published in 1842. Tennyson himself says "*Ulysses* was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death and gave my feeling about the need of going forward and braving the struggle of life more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*." The poem should be compared in sentiment with *The Lotos-Eaters* and in style with *Cenone*.

It little profits that an idle king,
 By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
 Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me. 5
 I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
 Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades¹ 10
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known : cities of men,
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ; 15
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met ;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life

1. **Hyades**—A group of seven stars in the head of the constellation, Taurus. Their rising and setting were believed to be attended by much rain.

Were all too little, and of one to me 25
 Little remains : but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail :
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, 45
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
 with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ; 50
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the
 deep 55

Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths¹ 60
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,²
 And see the great Achilles,³ whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho' 65
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

THE LOTOS-EATERS

First published in 1832, and republished in 1842 in a much improved and altered form. The poem is founded on a brief incident in the career of Ulysses, who on his way home from the Trojan War, halted for a time at the land of the Lotophagi or Lotos-Eaters. Here grew a flower, the Lotus, which possessed the magic quality of making the person who ate of it forget all the happenings of his past life. The poem is of course dramatic, as is *Ulysses*. The *Choric Song* gives expression to the opinions of the sailors as a whole.

'Courage !' he said,⁴ and pointed toward the land,
 'This mounting wave will roll us shore-ward soon.'
 In the afternoon they came unto a land

1. **Baths**—The ancients believed that the stars in setting sank into the ocean.

2. **Happy Isles**—The Paradise of the Greeks. A group of islands supposed to be situated off the west coast of Africa.

3. **Achilles**—The hero of the Trojan war. His arms, after his death, were awarded to Ulysses.

4. **He said**—The speaker is Ulysses.

In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon, 5
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke, 10
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops, 15
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale 20
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
A land where all things always seem'd the same !
And round about the keel with faces pale, 25
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem, .
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them, 30
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;

And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake, 35
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
 Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore 40
 Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
 Then some one said, ' We will return no more ' ;
 And all at once they sang, ' Our island home¹
 Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam.' 45

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50
 Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
 skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 55
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,

1. **Island home**—Ithaca, an island on the west coast of Greece, over which Ulysses ruled as king.

While all things else have rest from weariness ?
 All things have rest : why should we toil alone, 60
 We only toil, who are the first of things,
 And ~~make~~ perpetual moan,
 Still from ~~one~~ sorrow to another thrown :
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings, 65
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm:
 Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
 'There is no joy but calm !'
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood, 70
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
 With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow 75
 Falls, and floats adown the air.
 Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days, 80
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 85
 Death is the end of life ; ah, why
 Should life all labour be ?

Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ? 90
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ? 95
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful
 ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 105
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, 110
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 115

And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change :
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes¹ over-bold 120
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?
 Let what is broken so remain. 125
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto aged breath, 130
 Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,²
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
 With half-dropt eyelidsstill, 135
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine— 140
 To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling

1. **Island princes**—After all hope of the return of Ulysses had been given up, Penelope, the wife of the absent hero, was sought in marriage by the princes of the neighbouring islands, who took possession of the house of Ulysses, and really usurped the rule of the island.

2. **Amaranth and moly**—Two famous plants often mentioned in the Greek poets.

Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the
 pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak : 145
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellow tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
 dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we, 150
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the
 surge was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
 fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind. 155
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are
 hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
 lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
 world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
 deeps and fiery sands, 160

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
 ships, and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a dole-
 ful song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
 wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
 soil, 165
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
 toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
 oil ;
 Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd
 —down in hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys¹
 dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
 shore
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
 and oar ;
 O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

ÆNONE

First printed in 1833 but revised and very much improved in 1842. The poem, although Grecian in form, is entirely modern in spirit.

At the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, Eris, the goddess of Discord, who had not been invited to the wedding, threw upon the table a golden apple upon which was engraved : "For the fairest." The apple was at once claimed by Herè, Pallas Athene and Aphrodité (Juno, Minerva and Venus), and Zeus, not wishing himself to decide in so delicate a matter, appointed Paris, a shepherd on Mount Ida, as umpire. The goddesses appeared before Paris, who after listening to their several promises, awarded the prize to Aphrodité. Although Paris was living on Mount Ida as a simple shepherd, he was in reality the son of Priam, king of Troy. He had been exposed on the hills as an

1. **Elysian valleys**—Heavenly places.

infant, but had been rescued by a shepherd and brought up there. He married C  none, and was living quite happily with her when he gave his decision in the contest among the goddesses. After being recognised as the son of Priam, he deserted C  none and by his abduction of Helen precipitated the war that caused the ruin of his country.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
 Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
 The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
 Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
 And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand 5
 The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
 Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
 The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
 In cataract after cataract to the sea.
 Behind the valley topmost Gargarus 10
 Stands up and takes the morning : but in front
 The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
 Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
 The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon

Mournful C  none, wandering forlorn 15
 Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
 Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
 Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
 She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
 Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade 20
 Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :
 The grasshopper is silent in the grass : 25
 The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flowers droop : the golden bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love, 30
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves 35
That house the cold crown'd snake ! O mountain
brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,¹
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls²
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed, 40
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 45
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved, 50
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.

1. **River-God**—Ænone was the daughter of the River-God, Kebren.

2. **Yonder walls**—The walls of Troy were fabled to have been built by Apollo to the music of his flute.

Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes 55
 I sat alone : white-breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens 60
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,¹ 65
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
 Came down upon my heart.

"My own C  none,
 Beautiful-brow'd C  none, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n 70
 "For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
 As lovelier than whatever Oread² haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die. 75
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added 'This was cast upon the board,
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon

1. **Hesperian gold**—The golden apples of the Hesperides, nymphs who resided in the far western island, were famous in classical literature.

2. **Oread**—Mountain nymph.

Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due : 80
 But light-foot Iris¹ brought it yester-eve,
 Delivering, that to me, by common voice
 Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
 Pallas and Aphroditè,² claiming each
 This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave 85
 Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
 Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
 Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud 90
 Had lost his way between the piney sides
 Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came.
 Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
 And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
 Violet, amaracus, and asphodel, 95
 Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
 And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
 This way and that, in many a wild festoon
 Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
 With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'. 100

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom 105
 Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods

1. **Iris**—The Messenger of the Gods : the rainbow.

2. **Here, Pallas and Aphroditè**—Herè was the wife of Zeus and the queen of Heaven; Pallas the goddess of wisdom and of war; and Aphroditè, the goddess of love and of beauty.

Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule
 Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
 Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.
 Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
 From many an inland town and haven large, 115
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
 'Which in all action is the end of all ; 120
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred
 And throned of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born, 125
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss 130
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
 Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood 135
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,

The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek 140
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law, 145
Acting the law we live by without fear ;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said : ‘I woo thee not with gifts 150
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed

If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair, 155
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks, 160
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.’

“Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, ‘O Paris, 165
Give it to Pallas !’ but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Idalian¹ Aphroditè beautiful, 170
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian¹ wells,
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
 And shoulder : from the violets her light foot 175
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes, 180
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,'
 She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear :
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm, 185
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
 And I was left alone within the bower ;
 And from that time to this I am alone,
 And I shall be alone until I die. 190

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard, 195
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail

1. **Idalian, Paphian**—Idalium and Paphos were towns in Cyprus, sacred to the worship of Aphroditè.

Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew 200
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 They came, they cut away my tallest pines,¹
 My tall pines dark, that plumed the craggy ledge 205
 High over the blue gorge, and all between
 The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
 Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
 The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat 210
 Low in the valley. Never, never more
 Shall lone Cēnone see the morning mist
 Sweep thro' them ; never see them over-laid
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
 Between the loud stream and the trembling stars. 215

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
 Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
 The Abominable,² that uninvited came 220
 Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
 And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
 And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind,

1. **Tallest pines**—To make ships for the embassy of Paris to the court of Menelaus, where he went in fulfilment of the promise of Aphroditè. There he met the wife of Menelaus, Helen, whom he carried away to Troy.

2. **The Abominable**—Eris, the goddess of Discord.

And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men. 225

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev’n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?
Seal’d it with kisses ? water’d it with tears ? 230
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth ; 235
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die. 240

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills, 245
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born : her child !—a shudder comes
Across me : never child be born of me, 250
Unblest, to vex me with his father’s eyes !

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,

Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
 Walking the cold and starless road of Death 255
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
 With the Greek woman.¹ I will rise and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra,² for she says
 A fire dances before her, and a sound 260
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
 What this may be I know not, but I know
 That, whereso'er I am by night and day,
 All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE EPIC

First published in 1842. The *Morte d'Arthur* has since been incorporated with scarcely a change in *The Passing of Arthur*, the last of the *Idylls of the King*. *The Epic* forms the introduction to and gives the setting of the poem. Here the *Morte d'Arthur* is nothing more than a fragment, but a fragment which yet has a strong moral purpose. This is brought out both in the introduction and in the closing lines.

After the discovery of the infidelity of the queen and the flight of Lancelot, Arthur followed the latter into his own land, where a bitter war was waged. He was recalled from this conflict by the news that his nephew, Modred, had rebelled against him and had claimed the crown. On his way to overtake Modred, he stops at the convent at Amesbury, where Guinevere had taken refuge, and after a farewell interview with her, he comes up with Modred in the land of Lyonesse, where he defeats and kills the traitor, but is himself mortally wounded in the combat. The fragment begins at this point.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
 The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
 Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
 The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,

1. **The Greek woman**—Helen.

2. **Cassandra**—The Trojan prophetess, daughter of Priam, who was doomed to have her prophecies laughed at and disregarded.

The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl, 5
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond, 10
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners, 15
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none, 20
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way
At college : but another which you had, 25
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that ?' 'You know,' said Frank,
 'he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—
And then to me demanding why ? 'Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else 30
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :
God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said
 Hall.
'Why take the style of those heroic times ? 35

For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
 Nor we those times ; and why should any man
 Remodel models ? these twelve books of mine
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,' 40
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
 And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ; 45
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame
 When we were Freshmen : then at my request
 He brought it ; and the poet little urged,
 But with some prelude of disparagement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes, 50
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
 Until King Arthur's table,¹ man by man,
 Had fallen in Lyonesse about their Lord, 55
 King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere² uplifted him,
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken cross, 60
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
 On one side lay the Ocean, and on one

1. **King Arthur's table**—The Knights of the Round Table, the order founded by Arthur.

2. **Sir Bedivere**—

For bold in heart, and act and word was he,
 Wherever slander breathed against the king.

The Coming of Arthur

Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

'The sequel of to-day unsolders all. 65

The goodliest fellowship of famous knights

Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep

They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we

Shall never more, at any future time,

Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds, 70

Walking about the gardens and the halls

Of Camelot,¹ as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—

Tho' Merlin² sware that I should come again

To rule once more—but let what will be, be, 75

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm

That without help I cannot last till morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,³

Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how

In those old days, one summer noon, an arm 80

Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

Holding the sword—and how I row'd across

And took it, and have worn it, like a king :

And, wheresoever I am sung or told 85

In aftertime, this also shall be known :

But now delay not : take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle mere :

Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere : 90

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,

1. **Camelot**—The capital of the Arthurian dominions.

2. **Merlin**—The great enchanter of Arthur's court, who had made him king and supported him by his wisdom.

3. **Excalibur**—The word means "cut iron." See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 294-308.

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly¹ bring thee word." 95

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down 100
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth 105
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood, 110
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge. 115
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave ?
What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere : 120
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :

1. **Lightly**—Quickly.

“Thou hast betray’d thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem’d 125
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had follow’d, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again 130
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix’d in thought ; 135
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
‘And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note, 140
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done ?
What harm, undone ? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule. 145
Were it well to obey, then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself ?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath 150
And rumours of a doubt ? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, ‘King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.’¹ 155

1. **Maiden of the Lake**—See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 282–293.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'

So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honour and much fame were lost." 160

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :

"What is it thou hast seen ? or what hast heard ?" 165

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue, 170

Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me !

Authority forgets a dying king,

Laid widow'd of the power in his eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights, 175

In whom should meet the offices of all,

Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl

Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice, 180

And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,

I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged 185

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,¹ 190
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 195
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done. 200
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die, 205
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, 210
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
"My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight, 215
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes 220

1. **Northern morn**—The Aurora B. realis.

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands, 225
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick! 230
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry 235
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang 240
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern, 245
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens¹ with crowns of gold—and from them
rose

1. **Three Queens**—Morgan le Fay, the sister of Arthur; the Queen of Northgales and the Queen of the Wastelands. In the Tennysonian version of the story, as found in the *Idylls of the King*, the queens typify Faith, Hope and Charity. See *The Coming of Arthur*, lines 275–278.

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, 250
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge," 255
And to the barge they came. There those three
Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his
hands, 260

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ; 265
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust ;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose, 270
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged 275
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
"Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead, 280

When every morning brought a noble chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been not since the light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved 285
 Which was an image of the mighty world ;

And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds,"

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge : 290

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
 And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?

I have lived my life, and that which I have done 295

May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day. 300

For what are men better than sheep or goats

That nourish a blind life within the brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer

Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every way 305

Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way

With these thou seest—if indeed I go—

(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)

To the island-valley of Avilion¹; 310

1. **Avilion**—A mythical island, somewhat similar to the Happy Isles or the Elysian Fields. It was supposed to be situated near Glastonbury, and it was here that Joseph of Arimathea first landed when he came to Britain.

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound." 315

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere 320
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and
fell : 325

At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good !" but we
Sat rapt : it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness— 330
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work ;
I know not : but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud ; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn :
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used, 335
"There now—that's nothing !" drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue :
And so to bed ; where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores, 340
Point after point ; till on to dawn, when dreams

Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
 To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman 345
 Of stateliest port ; and all the people cried,
 "Arthur is come again : he cannot die."
 Then those that stood upon the hills behind
 Repeated—"Come again, and thrice as fair ;"
 And, further inland, voices echoed—"Come 350
 With all good things, and war shall be no more."
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,
 That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
 The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

Published on the 18th of November, 1852, the day on which the Duke of Wellington was buried. This *Ode* gives clear expression to the character of Tennyson's patriotism.

I

Bury the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,
 Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
 Mourning when their leaders fall, 5
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore ?
 Here, in streaming London's central roar.¹

1. **Central roar**—Wellington is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in the heart of London.

Let the sound of those he wrought for, 10
Let the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go, 15
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow ;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past. 20
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute, 25
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war, 30
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew, 35
O voice from which their omens all men drew.
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew !

Such was he whom we deplore. 40
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor¹ will be seen no more.

V

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son. 45
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river, 50
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds : 55
Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd 60
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom 65
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70

1. **World-victor's victor**—The conqueror of Napoleon.

In that dread sound to the great name
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.
 O civic muse, to such a name,
 To such a name for ages long,
 To such a name,
 Preserve a broad approach of fame
 And ever-echoing avenues of song.

75

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest, 80
 With banner and with music, with soldier and with
 priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?
 Mighty Seaman,¹ this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.
 Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man, 85
 The greatest sailor since our world began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea ; 90
 His foes were thine ; he kept us free:
 O give him welcome, this is he,
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
 And worthy to be laid by thee ;
 For this is England's greatest son, 95
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun ;
 This is he that far away

1. **Mighty Seaman**—Nelson, who is also buried in St. Paul's. The bodies of Nelson and of Wellington lie side by side.

Against the myriads of Assaye¹
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ; 100
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs²
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines, 105
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms, 110
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men, 115
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings, 120
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
 On that loud sabbath³ shook the spoiler down ;
 A day of onsets of despair !
 Dash'd on every rocky square 125
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;

1. **Assaye**—Wellington, when he defeated the armies of the Mahrattas in Hindostan, had a force not one-tenth as great as that of his opponents.

2. **Vast designs**—The lines of Torres Vedras, one of which was twenty-nine miles in length.

3. **Loud sabbath**—Waterloo was fought on Sunday, the 18th of June, 1815.

Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
 Thro' the long-tormented air,
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and overthrew. 130
 So great a soldier taught us there,
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo !
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven guile, 135
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there at all, 140
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !
 And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human fame, 145
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
 Eternal honour to his name. 150

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
 Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;
 Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming showers, 155
 We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and regret

To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul 160
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ; 165
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust. 170
Remember him who led your hosts ;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests lour 175
For ever silent ; even if they broke
In thunder, silent ; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ; 180
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
Who never spoke against a foe ; 185
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right :
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;
Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light 190
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands 195
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state. 200
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes, 205
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory: 210
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled 215
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he : his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand 220
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure :
Till in all lands and thro' all human story

The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame 225
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him, 230
Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see :
Peace, it is a day of pain 235
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung. 240
Ours the pain, be his the gain !
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere ; 245
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane : 250
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,

Until we doubt not that for one so true 255
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore 260
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ? 265
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears :
The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ; 270
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State, 275
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
But speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him. 280
God accept him, Christ receive him.

YOU ASK ME WHY

This and the two lyrics that follow were written about 1833, although not published until 1842. They give in brief and condensed form a statement of the political opinions of the poet. Although written in youth, they represent the mature thought of Tennyson, and might have been written at any period of his life. They are remarkable chiefly for powerful thought, and condensed and restrained expression.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas?

It is the land that freemen till, 5
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown, 10
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought 15
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute; 20

Tho' Power should make from land to land
 The name of Britain trebly great—
 Tho' every channel of the State
 Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
 Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
 And I will see before I die
 The palms and temples of the South.

25

OF OLD SAT FREEDOM

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
 The thunders breaking at her feet :
 Above her shook the starry lights :
 She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
 Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
 But fragments of her mighty voice
 Came rolling on the wind.

5

Then stept she down thro' town and field
 To mingle with the human race,
 And part by part to men reveal'd
 The fulness of her face—

10

Grave mother of majestic works,
 From her isle-altar gazing down,
 Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,¹
 And, King-like, wears the crown :

15

1. **Triple forks**—Neptune, the God of the Ocean, is represented as carrying the trident.

Her open eyes desire the truth.

The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

20

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE THOU THY LAND¹

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

5

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
That every sophister can lime.

10

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

15

1. An excellent paraphrase of this somewhat difficult poem is given in Professor Pelham Edgar's edition of *Select Poems of Tennyson* (Morang & Co.), pages 113-115.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds. 20

Watch what main-currents draw the years ;
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch 25
Of pension, neither count on praise :
It grows to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw;
Not master'd by some modern term; 30
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
Set in all lights by many minds, 35
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form. 40

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free 45
 To ingroove itself with that, which flies,
 And work, a joint of state, that plies
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
 For all the past of Time reveals 50
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
 A motion toiling in the gloom—
 The Spirit of the years to come 55
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school;
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,
 New Majesties of mighty States— 60

The warders of the growing hour,
 But vague in vapour, hard to mark;
 And round them sea and air are dark
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd, 65
 Is bodied forth the second whole.
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
 And heap their ashes on the head; 70
 To shame the boast so often made,
 That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth 75
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood; 80

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay, 85
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes : 90
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead :
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed 95
Raw Haste, ha'f-sister to Delay.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

First published in the London *Examiner*, December 9, 1854,
in commemoration of the glorious charge of the Light Brigade at
Balaklava.

I

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward, the Light Brigade ! 5
Charge for the guns !' he said :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade !'
Was there a man dismay'd ? 10
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die : 15
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them 20
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred. 25

IV

F ash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while 30
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke 35
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not—
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them, 40
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well 45
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ? 50
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred ! 55

A DREAM OF THE FUTURE

This extract is taken from *Locksley Hall*, first published in 1842.

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that
would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic
sails;

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with
costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd
a ghastly dew, 5

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central
blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind
rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging thro'
the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-
 flags were furl'd
 In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
 world. 10

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful
 realm in awe,
 And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal
 law.

THE POET'S SONG

First published in 1842.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
 He pass'd by the town and out of the street,
 A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
 And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
 And he sat him down in a lonely place, 5
 And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
 That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
 And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,¹
 The snake slipt under a spray, 10
 The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
 And stared, with his foot on the prey,
 And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many
 songs,
 But never a one so gay,
 For he sings of what the world will be 15
 When the years have died away.'

1. **Bee**—This was subsequently changed to "fly."

THE POET

First published in the volume of 1830. The poem was written before Tennyson was twenty-one years of age and indicates the high ideal he at that early age held in regard to his vocation. This ideal remained with him until the end.

The poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above ;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill, 5
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
 The secretest walks of fame : 10
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds¹ blown from his silver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus² they sung, 15
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
 Them earthward till they lit ;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,³
 The fruitful wit 20

1. **Indian reeds**—Arrows used by various tribes of Indians in connection with the blow-pipe.

2. **Calpe unto Caucasus**—From the extreme eastern point of Europe to the extreme western point; from one end of the world to the other.

3. **Field flower**—The dandelion, for example.

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance. grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling 25
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire. 30
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd, 35
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow. 40

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame 45
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder 50
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word 55
She shook the world.

THE DYING SWAN

First published in the volume of 1830.

I

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran, 5
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went. 10

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,

And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ; 15
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green and still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow. 20

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky, 25
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ; 30
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of
gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star. 35
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the sougling reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng 40
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

First published in the volume of 1833.

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.

5

Old year, you must not die ;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :

10

He will not see the dawn of day.

He hath no other life above.

He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

15

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;

A jollier year we shall not see.

20

But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,

And tho' his foes speak ill of him,

He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

25

He was full of joke and jest,

But all his merry quips are o'er.

To see him die, across the waste 30
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend,
 And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend, 35
 Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow

I heard just now the crowing cock.

The shadows flicker to and fro :

The cricket chirps : the light burns low : 40

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :

What is it we can do for you ?

Speak out before you die. 45

His face is growing sharp and thin.

Alack ! our friend is gone.

Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :

Step from the corpse, and let him in

That standeth there alone, 50

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

THE BLACKBIRD

First published in the volume of 1833.

O Blackbird ! sing me something well :

While all the neighbours shoot thee round,

I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,

Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry :
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE EAGLE

First published in 1851.

He clasps the crag with hooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

THE OWL

First published in the volume of 1830.

When cats run home and light is come,
 And dew is cold upon the ground,
 And the far-off stream is dumb,
 And the whirring sail goes round,
 And the whirring sail goes round ;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

5

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
 And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
 And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch 10
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,
 Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
 Alone and warming his five wits,
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK!

"It was made in a Lincolnshire lane at 5 o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges" and published in 1842. It is generally taken to refer to the death of Arthur Henry Hallam.

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play !
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay !

5

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ; 10
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead 15
Will never come back to me.

A FAREWELL

First published in 1842. The brook referred to is that at Somersby, the birthplace of the poet.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea, 5
A rivulet, then a river :
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver; 10
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be, 15
For ever and for ever.

CIRCUMSTANCE

First published in the volume of 1830.

Two children in two neighbour villages,
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas ;
 Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;
 Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ; 5
 Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
 Wash'd with still rains and daisy blossomed ;
 Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;
 So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

AMPHION

First published in 1842. "In this humorous allegory," says John Churton Collins, "the poet bewails his unhappy lot on having fallen on an age so unpropitious to poetry, contrasting it with the happy times so responsive to his predecessors, who piped to a world prepared to dance to their music. However, he must toil and be satisfied if he can make a little garden blossom."

My father left a park to me,
 But it is wild and barren,
 A garden too with scarce a tree,
 And waster than a warren;
 Yet say the neighbours when they call 5
 It is not bad but good land,
 And in it is the germ of all
 That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
 In days of old Amphion,¹ 10

¹ **Amphion** is fabled to have built the walls of Thebes to the music of his lyre. Tennyson here apparently ascribes to Amphion the powers said to have been possessed by Orpheus.

And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
 Nor cared for seed or scion!
 And had I lived when song was great,
 And legs of trees were limber,
 And ta'en my fiddle to the gate, 15
 And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
 Such happy intonation,
 Wherever he sat down and sung
 He left a small plantation; 20
 Wherever in a lonely grove
 He set up his forlorn pipes,
 The gouty oak began to move,
 And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown, 25
 And, as tradition teaches,
 Young ashes pirouetted down
 Coquetting with young beeches;
 And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
 Ran forward to his rhyming, 30
 And from the valleys underneath
 Came little cosses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
 The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
 And down the middle, buzz! she went 35
 With all her bees behind her;
 The poplars, in long order due,
 With cypress promenaded,
 The shock-head willows two and two
 By rivers galloped. 40

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:
Old elms came breaking from the vine, 45
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended, 50
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves 55
The random sunshine lighten'd !

O, Nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure. 60
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!
And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons !

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age 65
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping, 70

A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground, 75
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of transplanting trees
To look as if they grew there. 80

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbours clipt and cut, 85
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy ; 90
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed 95
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil

To grow my own plantation.
 I'll take the showers as they fall,
 I will not vex my bosom:
 Enough if at the end of all
 A little garden blossom.

100

ODE TO MEMORY

First published in 1830. The whole of this ode is a very vivid description of the poet's early home at Somersby. Tennyson himself considered this to be one of his very finest nature poems.

I

Thou who stealest fire,
 From the fountains of the past,
 To glorify the present; oh, haste,
 Visit my low desire!
 Strengthen me, enlighten me!
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

5

II

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day; but robed in soften'd light
 Of orient state.
 Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,
 When she, as thou,
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight

10

15

Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
 Which in wintertide shall star
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

20

III

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
 And with the evening cloud,
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast,
 (Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind

Never grow sere,

25

When rooted in the garden of the mind,
 Because they are the earliest of the year.)

Nor was the night thy shroud.

In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
 The eddying of her garments caught from thee
 The light of thy great presence ; and the cope

30

Of the half-attain'd futurity,

Tho' deep not fathomless,

Was cloven with the million stars which tremble
 O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.

35

Small thought was there of life's distress ;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :

Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,

40

Listening the lordly music flowing from

The illimitable years.

O, strengthen me, enlighten me !

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

45

IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
 Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes!
 Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
 Unto mine inner eye,
 Divinest Memory!

50

Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
 Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall
 Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :
 Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side, 55
 The seven elms, the poplars four¹
 That stand beside my father's door,
 And chiefly from the brook² that loves
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
 Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves, 60
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,

In every elbow and turn,
 The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland;
 O! hither lead thy feet!

Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat 65
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,
 When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud
 Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
 What time the amber morn 70
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

V

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
 To the young spirit present

¹ **The poplars four**—These have now disappeared.

² **The brook**—The Somersby brook, so frequently referred to by Tennyson.

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To their haven under the hill ; 10
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
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Large dowries doth the raptured eye
 To the young spirit present

¹ **The poplars four**—These have now disappeared.

² **The brook**—The Somersby brook, so frequently referred to by Tennyson.

Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, 5
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys, 10
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope, 15
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream, 20

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea 25
And reaps the labour of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands ;
“ Does my old friend remember me? ”

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new, 5
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ; 10
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life, 15
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in. 20

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ; 25
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ; 30
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CXIV

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail
Against her beauty ? May she mix
With men and prosper ! Who shall fix
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire : 5
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
She cannot fight the fear of death. 10
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place ; 15
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain ; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child : 20

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee, 25
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow 5
From form to form, and nothing stands ;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true ; 10
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

First printed in *The Examiner* in 1849 and afterwards published in the 6th edition of the "*Poems*" in 1850. The sub-title was added in 1853. It is supposed that the poem is addressed to Charles Tennyson Turner, the poet's brother, and that the volume referred to is Lord Houghton's "*Life and Letters of Keats.*"

You might have won the Poet's name,
 If such be worth the winning now,
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice, 5
 A life that moves to gracious ends
 Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
 A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom 10
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown;
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
 Nor leave his music as of old,
 But round him ere he scarce be cold 15
 Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not show:
 Break lock and seal: betray the trust:
 Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
 The many-headed beast should know.' 20

Ah, shameless ! for he did but sing
 A song that pleased us from its worth;
 No public life was his on earth,
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best; 25
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.
 My Shakespeare's curse¹ on clown and knave
 Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be
 The little life of bank and brier, 30
 The bird that pipes his lone desire
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
 And drops at Glory's temple gates,
 For whom the carrion vulture waits 35
 To tear his heart before the crowd !

FROM "THE PALACE OF ART"

First published in 1833, but very much changed in the edition of 1842 and in subsequent editions. The extract here used is a description of the rooms in the palace.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
 All various, each a perfect whole
 From living Nature, fit for every mood
 And change of my still soul.

¹ **My Shakespeare's curse—**

Good frend for Jesus' sake forbear
 To digg the dust enclosed heare;
 Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones
 And curst be he yt moves my bones.

For some were hung with arras green and blue, 5
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone, 10
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves, 15
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain. 20

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags, 25
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees, 30

Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there, 35
Not less than truth design'd.

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